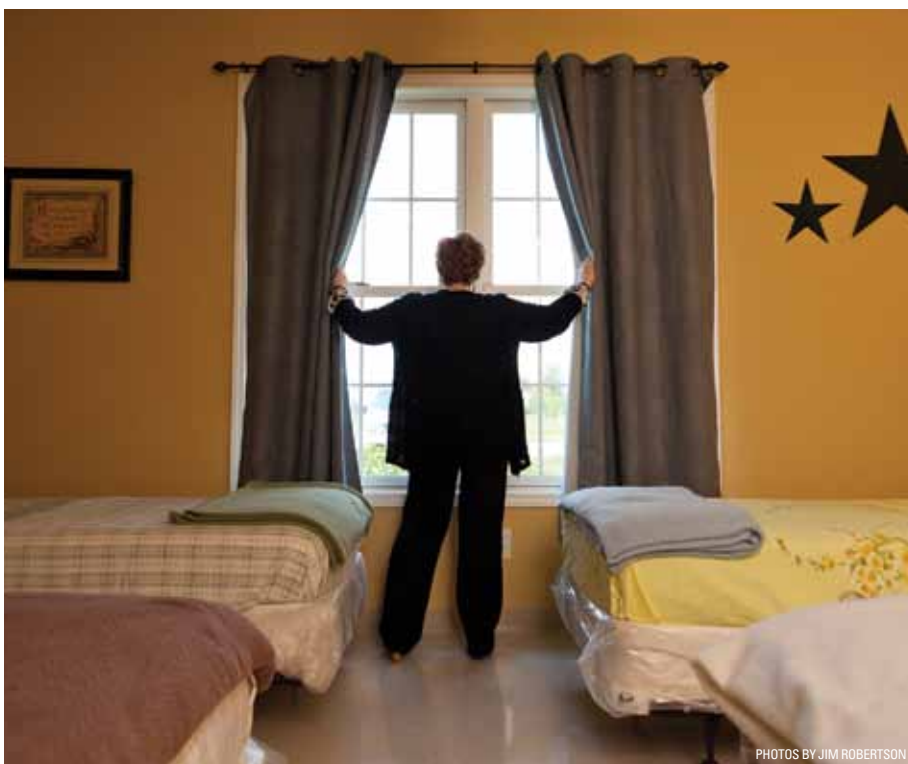




▲ Women's Crisis Center Executive Director Marsha Croxton (right) talks with WCC Rural Services Director Laura Kinney (above) about the ways in which WCC serves its 13-county coverage area. More than 150 volunteers working hand-in-hand with advocates provide a wide range of valuable programs .



▲ Barren River Area Safe Space Executive Director Lee Alcott works with advocates who split their work days between the shelter and police department, helping to follow up on domestic violence cases and better serve victims in their community.



PHOTOS BY JIM ROBERTSON

▲ Hope's Wings domestic violence shelter Assistant Director Suzanne Howell now also serves the community as part of a two-person domestic violence team within the Richmond Police Department. Hope's Wings has struggled with funding to keep its doors open, but Howell is excited about working together with law enforcement to serve victims.

>> officer, but there are other resources in the community that might be more beneficial — or additionally beneficial — to the individual,” Kinney said.

Richmond Police Advocate Suzanne Howell hopes that being able to provide those additional services outside of an arrest situation can relieve some officer frustration.

“So many times they can’t make an arrest,” she said. “So helping them understand that they can hand someone off to me and I have the time to sit and talk to them and find out what’s going on, and what they need, rather than feeling the frustration of, ‘Well, they don’t want me to arrest him, so what am I going to do?’

“I think officers probably at one time or another worked really hard for a victim, and it didn’t go the way they wanted it to go,” Howell continued. “So, when you invest in someone and they don’t do what you think they should do, you think, ‘Well, I’m done.’ That’s kind of understandable because you have a job to do. You don’t want to pour your heart out over every single situation, or you won’t be effective. But when that happens, they can call me.”

In Bowling Green, the Barren River Area Safe Space domestic violence shelter together with local law enforcement produced domestic violence assistance guides for officers to distribute to victims. The small, purple notebooks have information for victims about safety planning, resources, legal options and more. The guides help officers quickly and efficiently provide victims with a wealth of information and resources.

The Bowling Green Police Department now has a policy requiring officers to keep the guides in their cruisers to hand out to victims after realizing its success.

“I really like the idea that when the different groups can come together there can be an open mindedness,” said Lee Alcott, BRASS executive director. “That I am willing to listen to you and you’re willing to listen to me, too, and then that way we can build a better world for everyone. We’ll still learn from this agreement [with Bowling Green police] all the time and build on it. It’s always going to be a work in progress. But it’s so good.”

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